

REFORMA DE FLORIDA

Noticias del mes/News of the month

Notes from the Editor

It's December. If you're from up north (like I am) memories of the cold, snow, and ice remind me of why I moved to Florida 12 years ago!

President Lucia's column is especially poignant. Be sure to read it. Our next EC meeting is Tuesday, December 8 at 7 pm. Join us to learn more about our chapter. A ZOOM Link will be emailed on Dec. 7th..

REFORMA de Florida was at the recent Miami Book Fair. Read to see what we did there, and join us next November. We'd love to see you!

Are you a library school student? Have you been interviewed by Gaby? If not, read her column and get her contact info. We'd love to see what you're up to. Check out David's ideas for the holidays as well as Bibliotele's highlights of what to watch..

There are many holidays to celebrate in the month ahead, so stay safe and enjoy them.

Happy reading!

Alma Ramos-McDermott,
Editor

President's column

by Lucia M. Gonzalez



The holiday season is here, and it's a time for celebration and connection in our libraries. We work diligently to infuse a festive spirit and to create programs that honor the diverse cultures and traditions of our communities. It's a time for unity! However, this year feels particularly poignant. Many families in our

communities are grappling with significant challenges and uncertainties, including fears surrounding deportation. It's crucial that we come together to support our communities and one another during this special season.

Just last month, I had the privilege to be a guest storyteller at Broward County Library's StoryBook Fest at their Southwest Regional Library. This event holds a special place in my heart, as I have been involved for many years. I share stories from Venezuela, Cuba, and Haiti, and I always invite the children to raise their hands if they, or their parents, come from the land of the story being shared. This year, it was striking to see a change in the number of hands that went up as I asked how many were from Venezuela.

And yes, change is always in the air these days, especially in the Spanish book distribution world. We were surprised by the recent news of Baker & Taylor's closure. In the late 1980s and 1990s, they played a significant role in shifting public libraries towards outsourcing cataloging and processing services. As one of the industry's major players, many Spanish booksellers struggled to keep up and, unfortunately, some were acquired by larger companies. However, a few managed to survive and thrive.

One such survivor was Lectorum Publications, a true pioneer in the sale and distribution of Spanish books in the United States. Lectorum was founded in the 1960s by Teresa

President's column (continued)

Mlawer, a visionary business leader. Lectorum endured challenges, transformed itself and, ultimately, continued to grow. Lectorum was the go-to for “libros en español” from Latin America, Spain, the United States, and the world. And their staff were seasoned by the experience that resulted from years of service. They never gave up, and I was immensely proud of their journey! Unfortunately, last month we received the heartbreaking news that our own “giant,” Lectorum, was closing its doors.

In these changing times REFORMA de Florida, through its members, aims to serve as a valuable resource for information and professional exchange, offering feedback and expert advice on the development of Spanish-language collections. I hope our REFORMA de Florida Newsletter, along with our listserv, will provide a productive forum for sharing information and insights regarding Spanish collection development.

And finally, as librarians, we carry the responsibility to amplify the voices of those who cannot speak for themselves and to challenge the misrepresentations often found in mainstream media. By serving our communities through inclusive programming and collections, we can nurture understanding, acceptance, and a spirit of neighborly love. Together, we can help foster a sense of belonging and hope during this holiday season and beyond.

Happy Holidays! ¡Felices fiestas a todos y una feliz Navidad!

Lucia M. Gonzalez
2025-2026 President

You are invited!

Every month, the Executive Board of REFORMA de Florida holds an online meeting to discuss the business of the chapter, work on ways to encourage growth, and fine-tune our community involvement.

The next Board meeting is scheduled for Tuesday December 8th at 7 pm EST. A ZOOM link to join us will be sent to members on December 7th, so be sure to check your email.

Get to know your Board members and find out what's going on with your chapter. We hope to see you there.

REFORMA de Florida at the Miami Book Fair

by Alma Ramos-McDermott



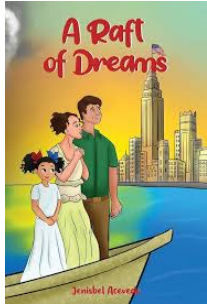
Every year, REFORMA de Florida participates in the Miami Book Fair. This year we were in charge of a middle school panel of authors titled “*Cuban American authors traverse Sea & Sky*,” held Sunday November 23.

President Lucia was the Moderator, and did a fabulous job interacting with Jenisbel Acevedo “*A raft of dreams*,” Ruth Behar “*Across so many seas*,” and

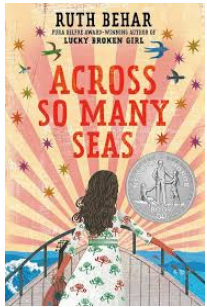


Miami Book Fair (continued)

Adrianna Cuevas “What fell from the sky.” Jenibel is a new author and a Doctor, Ruth is a Professor of Anthropology at the University of Michigan and Adrianna is a middle school ESL teacher in Texas. Though each brought a different mix of knowledge and experience to the table, they had a shared Cuban heritage. Additionally, they chose to write about the immigrant story so readers could learn from the past and see themselves in these shared histories.



“*A raft of dreams*” is Jenibel’s first book. In it, she recounts her harrowing 1993 trip from Cuba to Florida when she was 9 years old. Among the many terrors her family faced was being lost at sea for three days, enduring hunger, thirst, and a leaking boat.



“*Across so many seas*” is historical fiction, telling the story of four girls from different generations of a Jewish family in Spain, Turkey, Cuba, and Florida. By writing it, Ruth honors the Sephardic history of her paternal grandmother.



“*What fell from the sky*” takes place in a small Texas town in March 1952, when 100,000+ American soldiers invaded it. Adrianna includes an alien to add a little fantasy and light, but it **is** true that the United States military invaded an American town 73 years ago. Though it was “*only*” an 18 day “*exercise*,” it was traumatic to those who endured it.



Miami Book Fair (continued)

After the author panel, Immediate Past-President Maria Vega came with me to visit Cinco Books. Jenny Lizarraga, Publisher and ReDeFL member, and I had texted earlier so I knew she was at her booth. Luckily I stumbled upon it earlier in the day, as there were hundreds of vendor tents and it would have been difficult to find her before dark.



At Jenny's booth, Maria and I met Colombian children's author Liliana Orozco (Lilo). When Lilo's daughter was born, she called her a little "foca," and designed a series in her honor. She was selling the first two as a set in a white mesh bag with a small stuffed seal attached to the zipper. Written in Spanish, they're titled "*Cómo despertar a una foca*" and "*Cómo bañar a una foca.*"



I found them perfect for 2-4 year olds, and bought a set for my great-great nephew who just turned two. Since they're board books, they can be chewed and thrown around without lasting damage.



My great-great nephew doesn't know Spanish, and neither does his mother (my great-niece), or grandmother (my niece) since my sister didn't speak Spanish regularly at home when her children were growing up like my mom used to do. *(My mom came to NYC in 1945 from Puerto Rico when she was 11, and spoke both languages interchangeably. Growing up, we kids responded to her Spanish with our English. That's something I regret doing daily, as I*



*would be SO MUCH more fluent in Spanish now if I had responded **in Spanish** when I was younger.)*

Though my great-great nephew is fourth generation, and English is his main language, I'm going to sit him down and read a sentence in Spanish then translate it into English. Hopefully, his mom will listen and learn, too as we work our way through the book.

As usual, the Miami Book Fair was super crowded, very rewarding, and a resounding success for authors and audience members. If you haven't yet made it down to the southern part of town, put it on your calendar to come to Miami in 2026. It's usually held in the middle of November.



Dear Future Librarian

by Gaby Gomez



When You Don't Feel Like Enough... But Still Show Up

There are days when library school feels like the only place I'm growing, and everywhere else I feel small.

Balancing work and school is already hard, but it's even harder when you feel like your work doesn't see your worth. Like, your ideas don't matter. Like your presence is tolerated, not celebrated. And even though you're earning your degree, learning new skills, and showing up

with every bit of strength you have left... it still feels like you're not doing enough. Or worse, *you're not enough*.

Today, I'm writing this while listening to "Du Hast" by Rammstein (because sometimes rage is part of the process) and sipping a warm spearmint tea to remind myself that calm is still possible. The contrast is weirdly perfect. The music gives me power, and the tea gives me peace. And somewhere in the middle of that contradiction, I remember who I am.

I've learned that strength isn't always loud. Sometimes, it's quiet perseverance. It's getting up every day, logging in to your classes, showing up to work, and continuing to care. It's holding on to your vision for the future, even when your present feels foggy.

Dear future librarian: You are building something real. Every assignment, every database you master, every patron you help, every sleepless night you push through, it matters. Even when it's invisible to others. Even when you feel unseen.

One day you'll look back and realize: you didn't just survive this. You grew. You transformed. You found the kind of strength that can't be taught in a syllabus.

If today is hard, be gentle with yourself. If tomorrow is hard, remember that you've made it through worse. And if you feel like no one sees your effort, know this: believe there are people out there who truly see your worth, even if it's not at your workplace. Maybe it's an old colleague, a former supervisor, or a mentor who still believes in you. And above all else, *you* have to believe in yourself, through thick and thin, despite everything.

And if you're struggling, *really* struggling, please don't try to carry it alone. Mental health matters, especially in graduate school. Talk to someone, reach out to a counselor, a friend, a professor, or a support group. You deserve care too.

P.S. I'm still looking for MLIS students to interview! If you'd like to be featured in the next *Dear Future Librarian*, email me at gaby.gomez.26@outlook.com.

With hope, music, and spearmint in hand,
Gaby

!Latineando!

by David Hernandez Rivero



Saludos y bendiciones a todos los reformistas de Florida.

December is here and 2025 is almost gone. This is a month of closing and concluding the work we have been doing throughout the year. We also host numerous celebrations that unite people and families. December is also a winter month in the Northern Hemisphere, including the winter solstice associated with holidays such as Christmas, Hanukkah, and

Kwanza among others. Holidays and celebrations in December mark the transition from one calendar year to another; It is a time of reflection, rest, and renewal associated with the winter solstice and the end of one astronomical cycle. We offer gratitude for another year lived, for our accomplishments and successes while preparing for another year with new challenges.

As librarians that serve populations with diverse needs, we reflect on what we have achieved and identify those areas that need to be addressed. Our services always evolve because the communities we serve continue experiencing transformation. Our programs, outreach, resources will always adapt to new realities.

The community I serve, for example, has seen a significant increase in immigrants and new arrivals from the Caribbean as well as Spanish-Speaking Latin America. Therefore, we receive numerous requests for ESL materials, DMV examination books and manuals. In addition, our patrons also request numerous guides for license examinations such as nursing, cosmetology, FTCE (Florida Teacher Examination), professional truck driver, state officer examination, and numerous others. There was an increase in the need for programming as well. Our statistics show a great increase compared to 2024 for library cards. Therefore, our events have been well attended, and we realized there was a need for more juvenile and adult programs.

We opened new programs for preschool and elementary kids such as STEAM and art classes, Storytime, arts and crafts, chess, etc. For adults, we opened English and Spanish conversational classes. We included entrepreneurs' seminars conducted by County officials, pet vaccinations by the Broward County Animal Care department, County Property Appraiser sessions, health benefits seminars by non-profit organizations, etc. In addition, we hold celebrations for Black History and National Hispanic Heritage Month. In September we held a Hispanic celebration featuring IFE ILE, a renowned multidisciplinary dance company that explores Afro Cuban cultural legacy. A diverse audience had a memorable night that celebrated community, heritage and culture. My lesson is that innovation and transformation is an essential part of my job as my community keeps changing.

Latinos in the USA have brought numerous traditions with them. Christmas celebrations, for instance, are centered in Christianity with African and Pre-Colombian influences. A curious example is *La Navidad Negra* or Black Christmas celebrated by Afro Peruvians. This fabulous mix is expressed in decorations, culinary, artistic, and religious aspects.

Let's consider innovating with programs, decorations, book displays, and other events that

Latineando (continued)

incorporate our holiday traditions. Your community will appreciate a beautiful, decorated library with cultural motifs, nice book displays, and some other innovations. Patrons will enjoy book displays on culinary traditions; we might include art displays that include recipes and pictures of traditional dishes from all over Latin America.

Some popular decoration motifs are *guirnalda* (garlands) *foquitos* or *farolitos* (*luces navideñas* or Christmas lights), and *Nacimientos* (Nativity scenes.) Some ideas to include in our art displays about holiday food are tamales (popular in numerous Latino countries) or *pasteles* (Puerto Rico); other Christmas dishes are *Lechon Asado* Cuba, *pavo relleno* in numerous countries, and *Asado Argentino*. For dessert, some of the most famous are *buñuelos* (Mexico), *biscochitos* (Mexico), as well as *turrones*, *churros*, and *roscon* (Spain.) Traditional drinks include *chocolate caliente* (hot chocolate), *coquito* (Puerto Rico), and *crema de vie* (Cuba.) Do not forget that most Latinos celebrate *Nochebuena* or Christmas Eve. Latinos in their countries of origin did not celebrate Santa Claus but *Papa Noel* instead. A concert might be appreciated and your choices, if available, include cumbia, salsa, mariachis, and numerous others.

Do not forget to show gratitude for your community.

Happy Holidays and Happy New Year to all of you.

Nos vemos en el 2026.



***Bibliotele December Highlights:
Fresh & Fun Picks for your Library***
by Javier Hidalgo, Bibliotele



December is a special month in our libraries — a time when families slow down, spend more time together, and look for meaningful activities they can enjoy as a community. For many Latino families, these weeks are especially important: a season filled with tradition, togetherness, and cultural celebration.

It's also a moment when libraries play a central role, offering safe spaces, multilingual programs, and cultural events that bring people closer during the holidays.

With that in mind, we've curated a selection of **8 fresh, family-friendly, and purpose-driven titles** available on Bibliotele. These picks are designed to support your holiday programming, offer culturally relevant options for Latino patrons, spark conversations around empathy and resilience, and provide warm, engaging content for audiences of all ages.

Editors Note: Don't forget that REFORMA de Florida chapter members can email bola@bibliotele.com for a complimentary Bibliotele account.



Bibliotele (continued)

December Highlights



Holiday/Christmas Programming



1. Topa, una Navidad especial

Children's Theater · Argentina

Beloved Argentine children's star **Topa** brings a musical Christmas celebration full of color, joy, and festive energy. A perfect pick for cheerful family events and holiday-themed screenings.



2. Red Riding Hood, A Musical Tale

Kids Musical Theater · Mexico · Award-Winning

Led by the charismatic **Violeta Isfel**, this award-winning musical reinvents the classic *Little Red Riding Hood* with surprising twists, upbeat numbers, and playful characters. Ideal for family-friendly holiday programming that gets kids singing along.



Family-Friendly Picks for the Holiday Break



3. Ernest & Celestine (Ernest y Celestina)

Animated Feature · France/Belgium · Spanish Audio

An Oscar-nominated animated gem with watercolor-style visuals and a heartwarming story about an unlikely friendship between a bear and a mouse. Perfect for all-ages winter screenings, story time tie-ins, or creative family events.



4. Pirú: A Golden Journey

Family Dramedy · Peru · 2023

Starring **Emanuel Soriano** and **Andrés Salas**, this uplifting Peruvian adventure blends humor, heart, and life lessons. A great choice for multigenerational audiences looking for feel-good storytelling during the holiday season.



5. Jack and the Beanstalk

Classic Comedy/Musical · United States · 1952 (Restored)

Comedy legends **Abbott & Costello** bring this fairy-tale musical to life with vintage charm and laugh-out-loud moments. A perfect option for retro family movie days and intergenerational programs.

Bibliotele (continued)



December 3 – International Day of Persons with Disabilities



6. El chico de la burbuja (The Boy in the Plastic Bubble)

Feature Film · USA

A classic coming-of-age story exploring isolation, resilience, and hope. A thoughtful selection for conversations around disability, emotional wellbeing, and overcoming adversity.



December 10 – Human Rights Day



7. El Paso

Documentary · Mexico

Featuring real-life journalists like **Alejandro Hernández Pacheco**, this powerful documentary follows families seeking safety after threats in Mexico. A compelling option for programs on freedom of the press, migration, and human rights.



December 31 – Year-End Reflections



8. The Glass Castle

Feature Film · USA · 2017

Starring **Brie Larson**, **Woody Harrelson**, and **Naomi Watts**, this bestselling memoir adaptation explores family, forgiveness, and new beginnings. A meaningful way to close the year with reflection and inspiration.

Are you a Corporate member of REFORMA de Florida?

Corporate members are an important part of our chapter. Send a photo, business card, or a short blurb about your company for a future newsletter. We want to know more about you!

What's happening?: Northern, Central, or Southern regions

What's happening in your library or region related to our Latino community? Email your name, region, title, library name, a short summary of your news or event, and photos. Your news could help grow membership in your region, so we look forward to hearing from you.



***Were you forwarded this newsletter but are not yet a member of
REFORMA de Florida?***

To join or renew, go to REFORMA National's [Membership page](#) and be sure to check REFORMA de Florida as your chapter.

***Is your membership getting ready to expire?
Are you a Member-at-large?***

If you're not sure if your membership is expiring, [email](#) us to learn your status.

If you're a REFORMA National **Member-at-large** (that means you're not associated with REFORMA de Florida or any local chapter), **join the REFORMA de Florida chapter** as a full member.

Just log into your membership account, and check REFORMA de Florida as your chapter.

It's as easy as that!